

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

are launched forth probably in August and September. What the length of the embryo at birth is I cannot state but it is probably about 5 inches. The species is not very prolific, only 5 to 7 embryos having been observed in a single brood". Telford (1980) provides more definite information citing the example of three females in his collection, from the Northwest Frontier Province in Pakistan, giving birth to 6, 5 and 5 young on 27 August, 6 September and 8 September, 1975 respectively. The average length of the young (N=14) is given as: snout to vent (SV) 146.9 ± 2.2 mm and tail 24.3 ± 0.9 mm.

On 16 September, 1984 I collected one adult male and one obviously gravid female from a locality known as Pohur Pajan, about 11 km. east of the village of Batkote on the Anantnag — Pahalgam road in the State of Jammu and

Kashmir, at an altitude of approximately 2,200 m. One month later, on 17 October 1985 the female — measuring 500 mm total length and weighing 48 g. — gave birth to 2 live and 1 dead young. They measured as follows:

	Sex	Length (in mm.)		Weight (in g.)	Remarks
		snout to vent	tail		
1.	F	150	22	3	—
2.	F	162	20	3	—
3.	M	155	30	3	stillborn

Sexing was done by hemipenes eversion. The young were exact copies of the adults only, more brightly marked. In disposition they were very frisky and struck readily when provoked (unlike the adults), flattening their bodies and rapidly vibrating their tail tips. Efforts to keep them alive failed as they refused to feed.

PLOT 40, III EAST STREET,
THIRUVANMIYUR,
MADRAS - 41,
June 29, 1985.

SHEKAR DATTATRI

REFERENCES

- SMITH, M. A. (1943): The Fauna of British India, Reptilia and Amphibia, Vol. III, Serpentes. 1980 (1): 154-155.
 TELFORD, S. R. (1980): Notes on *Agkistrodon himalayanus* from Pakistan's Kaghan Valley. *Copeia* WALL, F. (1910): A popular treatise on the common Indian snakes, part XIII, *J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.*, Vol. XX, No. 1.

24. UNIQUE BEHAVIOUR OF BULL FROGS

I was reading Vol. 41(3) of the Society's *Journal* for April 1940 and came across Miscellaneous Note No. XVII at page 668 by Mr. H. N. Charrington titled "Snake attacked by frogs".

The above article made interesting reading in view of my own experience early one morning in 1974 at Konta of Bastar District. While on tour I was out for a morning walk

at about 6 a.m. The difference between Mr. Charrington's experience and mine were that the snake was a 'Dhaman' and was no less than 3' long and it actually held a bull frog greenish yellow in colour from behind and about 4 to 5 frogs of the same species were around the frog. The location was a shrub of *Ipomoea* and the water spread about 5' with a depth of 1 to 1½".

While the frogs were innumerable and of varied sizes and in water in the case of Mr. Charrington's experience, those in Konta were hardly five and all big and all almost on the ground. These frogs caught hold of the victim frog instead of attacking the snake who started bleeding and appeared greatly in pain

27 MIG INDRAVATI COLONY,
RAJATALAB,
RAIPUR (M.P.),
July 19, 1985.

[It appears that the frogs seen by Mr. Bharos were of a breeding congregation and were obviously males trying to mate with the female caught by the snake irrespective of its parlous situation. The note

due to bites. I wondered why the big frogs did not attack the snake.

I however relieved the frog from its miseries and imminent death by driving the snake away.

I wonder if anyone can throw light on the behaviour of the frogs.

R. R. BHAROS

25. THE STATUS OF THE NICOBAR TOADS *BUFO CAMORTENSIS*
MANSUKHANI & SARKAR, 1980 AND *BUFO SPINIPES*
FITZINGER IN STEINDACHNER, 1867

Mansukhani & Sarkar (1980) recently described a new species of toad (*Bufo camortensis*) from Camorta and Nancowry Islands in the Nicobar Islands of India. The species was poorly differentiated from the widely distributed and extremely variable *Bufo melanostictus*; furthermore, the authors overlooked Fitzinger's (in Steindachner 1867) description of a toad from the Nicobars more than one hundred years earlier. Herein I present evidence that, if some of the Nicobar toads are indeed recognizable as specifically distinct from *Bufo melanostictus*, they should be known as *Bufo spinipes*.

Fitzinger (1861: 415) first mentioned *Doci-dophryne spinipes* (a nomen nudum) in a preliminary report on the mammals and reptiles collected by the Austrian Frigate "Novara" on a voyage around the world in 1857-1859. The species was formally described and illustrated in Steindachner (1867: 43,

pl. 5, fig. 6-7) and the name was clearly attributed to Fitzinger. Although Steindachner almost certainly prepared the description (see Günther 1867) he used Fitzinger's earlier name and credited him with the species. Consequently, the author of the name is Fitzinger in Steindachner, 1867 (see the discussion of *Adenomera andreae*, described in the same fashion, in Heyer 1973).

Bufo spinipes was distinguished from *Bufo melanostictus* on the basis of the presence of a tarsal fold, the long, narrow parotoids, and the noticeably more slender body shape. Steindachner did indicate that the two taxa were very closely related. Günther (1867: 146) casually synonymised *B. spinipes* with *Bufo gymnnauchen* Bleeker, described from "Lingga" (=Kepulauan Lingga island group, off the east coast of Sumatra, Indonesia). *Bufo gymnnauchen* was later synonymised with *B. melanostictus* by Stoliczka (1870: 157).